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OCT 1991
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THE SANDMAN™

DISTANT·MIRRORS

THREE SEPTEMBERS AND A JANUARY

by

NEIL GAIMAN
SHAWN McMANUS

SEPTEMBER, 1859.

WELL, JOSHUA. WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO NOW?

SUICIDE? MM... YOU WOULD NOT BE THE FIRST FAILED BUSINESSMAN TO TAKE THAT ROUTE. TEN YEARS AGO YOU WERE A RICH MAN: RICH AND HAPPY.

AND NOW? NOW YOU'RE NOTHING, JOSHUA.

NOTHING, DID I SAY? NO. NOT NOTHING.

YOU HAVE *POTENTIAL*, JOSHUA. POTENTIAL FOR DESPAIR. PERHAPS FOR MORE THAN THAT...

HMMM...

MY BROTHER. I DO *NOT* STAND IN MY GALLERY, NEITHER DO I HOLD YOUR SIGIL IN MY HAND. BUT I CALL ON YOU.

DREAM? COME TO YOUR SISTER.

COME TO *DESPAIR*.

You called me, my sister. And I have come.

THREE SEPTEMBERS AND A JANUARY

WRITTEN BY *NEIL GAIMAN*, P.J.F.
DRAWN BY MISTER *SHAWN McMANUS*
COLORED BY PROFESSOR *DANIEL VOZZO*
LETTERED BY *TODD KLEIN*, NOTARY OF N.J.
ASSISTED BY *ALISA KWITNEY*, QUEEN OF N.Y.
EDITED BY *KAREN BERGER*, EMPRESS OF BROOKLYN

FEATURING CHARACTERS CREATED BY GAIMAN, KIETH AND DRINGENBERG

Why have you called me?

I HAVE A CHALLENGE FOR YOU, MY BROTHER. A SIMPLE CHALLENGE.

THIS MAN, JOSHUA, HAS ENTERED MY DOMAIN.

HIS LIFE HAS FALLEN APART. HE SITS IN THIS LITTLE ROOM CONTEMPLATING DEATH; BUT HE LACKS THE COURAGE EVEN FOR *THAT*.

LIFE HAS HURT HIM. WHAT CAN *YOU* DO, WITH YOUR LITTLE DREAMS, TO REDEEM HIM?

I do not play your games, Despair. I will take no part in this.

YOU *WILL* NOT, DREAM? OR YOU *CAN* NOT? THE CHALLENGE IS NOT JUST MINE: DESIRE AND DELIRIUM WILL STAND WITH ME ON THIS.

No.

I SEE. YOU THINK YOURSELF *BETTER* THAN YOUR FAMILY, DREAM. IT IS NO *WONDER* OUR BROTHER TURNED HIS BACK ON US.

YOU DID NOT CARE ABOUT *HIM*. YOU DO NOT CARE ABOUT *US*. IF YOU DID, *HE* WOULD NOT HAVE LEFT US...

Tch.

Sleep.

Who are you, Joshua? What makes you what you are?

What do you dream?

MY DREAMS, SIR? A MOST PECULIAR QUESTION.

BUT I AM JOSHUA ABRAHAM NORTON, ENTREPRENEUR AND INVENTOR.

I DREAM OF THE DARK DAY THAT FORTUNE DEALT ME AN EVIL HAND.

A SHIP FULL OF RICE... IT WAS MEANT TO MAKE ME TRULY *RICH*. INSTEAD IT WIPED ME OUT.

I DREAM OF *THAT*. SOMETIMES I DREAM THAT I AM STILL RESPECTED, STILL A MAN OF WORTH... BUT THEN I WAKE.

SOMETIMES WHEN I SLEEP I AM A BOY IN AFRICA ONCE MORE, DREAMING OF THE *NEW WORLD*, WHERE I SHALL MAKE MY FORTUNE.

BUT I CAME TO *AMERICA*: THE LAND OF POSSIBILITIES. AND IT IS A LAND OF CHAOS AND CONFUSION. A *COUNTRY* WITHOUT A KING...

A COUNTRY WITHOUT A *KING*.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

I am walking with him, in dreams. I am trying to understand him.

DREAMS. WHAT ARE *DREAMS*? DREAMS ARE *NOTHING*, MY BROTHER.

Dreams are "nothing," sister? Without dreams, there could be no despair.

BUT THERE'S NOWHERE TO GO *ANYMORE*.

NOTHING TO DREAM.

I DON'T HAVE *ANYTHING*.

CAN YOU *REALLY* KEEP HIM FROM MY REALM-- FROM *ALL* OUR REALMS-- BEFORE OUR OLDEST SISTER COMES FOR HIM?

THAT'S THE CHALLENGE, BROTHER.

ALREADY I HAVE MY *HOOK* IN HIS *HEART*.

AND WHAT IS THERE TO *UNDERSTAND*? HE'S *MORTAL*. HE'S *NOTHING*.

NO.

Then I will give you a dream, Joshua.

MISTER *NORTON*? HAVE YOU GOT *COMPANY* WITH YOU? I THOUGHT I HEARD FOLKS TALKING.

MISTER NORTON?

NO, MRS. ROUTLEDGE. I AM ALONE.

BUT I *MUST* REQUEST SILENCE, IF YOU PLEASE. I AM *DRAFTING* A *PROCLAMATION*.

OH. WELL, *THAT'S* ALL RIGHT, THEN.

WHAT DID YOU SAY? MISTER *NORTON*?

A *PROCLAMATION*, MRS. ROUTLEDGE. NOW I MUST HURRY, I'M AFRAID.

I'M TAKING IT TO THE NEWS-PAPER OFFICES. *THE EVENING BULLETIN* WOULD BE BEST, I THINK. *YES*.

A *NEWSPAPER*?

OH DEAR.

AND WHO WAS HE?

I'VE NEVER SEEN HIM BEFORE. BUT HE LOOKED PERFECTLY NORMAL TO ME. PERFECTLY POLITE.

JUST GAVE ME HIS LETTER, AND LEFT.

BUT... WELL, READ IT FOR YOURSELF.

AT THE PEREMPTORY REQUEST OF A LARGE MAJORITY OF THE CITIZENS OF THESE UNITED STATES, I, JOSHUA NORTON, FORMERLY OF ALGOA BAY, CAPE OF GOOD HOPE, AND FOR THE PAST NINE YEARS AND TEN MONTHS OF SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA...

...DECLARE AND PROCLAIM MYSELF EMPEROR OF THESE UNITED STATES, AND IN VIRTUE OF THE AUTHORITY IN ME VESTED, DO HEREBY ORDER AND DIRECT THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE DIFFERENT STATES OF THE UNION TO ASSEMBLE IN THE MUSIC HALL OF THIS CITY ON THE 1ST DAY OF FEBRUARY NEXT...

...THEN AND THERE TO MAKE SUCH ALTERATIONS IN THE EXISTING LAWS OF THE UNION AS MAY AMELIORATE THE EVILS UNDER WHICH THE COUNTRY IS LABORING, AND THEREBY CAUSE CONFIDENCE TO EXIST, BOTH AT HOME AND ABROAD, IN OUR STABILITY AND INTEGRITY.

AND IT'S SIGNED, NORTON I, EMPEROR OF THE UNITED STATES.

SEEMED NORMAL, YOU SAY, FITCH? I MUST CONFESS MYSELF SURPRISED.

WELL? WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO WITH THIS DRIVEL?

WHAT AM I GOING TO DO WITH IT? WHY, IS THAT NOT OBVIOUS?

I'M GOING TO PRINT IT.

WHAT *HAVE* YOU GOT YOURSELF INTO?

A contest.

I CAN *SEE* THAT. WITH DELIRIUM AND THE TWINS. BUT, HONESTLY--*WHY?* WE DON'T *PLAY* THEIR GAMES.

YOU KNOW THAT AS WELL AS I DO.

"Despair provoked me... she talked about our brother...

SO? THAT'S NOT *YOUR* FAULT. IT WAS *HIS DECISION*. HE'S A GROWN-UP. AND I THOUGHT *YOU* WERE TOO.

I *MAY* HAVE BEEN WRONG.

I *JUST* HOPE YOU *KNOW* WHAT YOU'RE *DOING*.

I hope that same thing, on occasion.

WHAT HAVE YOU *DONE* TO THAT POOR MAN, ANYWAY?

I have given him what many mortals have lived and died for, sister.

I have made him king.

SEPTEMBER, 1864.

DAMN.

DAMN.

DAMN. DAMN. DAMN.

DAMN.

DAMN.

DAMN.

DAMN.

DAMN!

HIYA, MISTER NORTON. HOW'S IT GOING.

DAMN.

DAMN.

DAMN.

DAMN.

DAMN.

NOT *MISTER* NORTON, SAM. I REALLY *SHOULDN'T* HAVE TO *REMIND* YOU. THE CORRECT FORM OF ADDRESS IS "*YOUR MAJESTY.*"

BUT EVERYTHING IS GOING *VERY* WELL, THANK YOU. AND YOU?

E MORNING CALL

BAD. *REAL* BAD.

I *OUGHT* TO BE ABLE TO MAKE THIS STORY WORK. BUT IT KEEPS SLIPPING *AWAY* FROM ME...

SAY, HAVE YOU *EATEN* RECENTLY, YOUR MAJESTY?

I... I AM A LITTLE HUNGRY.

WELL, I'M DOWN TO MY LAST COUPLE OF BUCKS. BUT C'MON. I'LL BUY YOU DINNER.

SAM, I COULD NOT ACCEPT CHARITY FROM YOU.

OH.

BUT IT OCCURS TO ME THAT YOU HAVE NOT PAID YOUR IMPERIAL TAXES, THIS YEAR. AND THEY COME TO... HMM. FIFTY CENTS.

HERE YOU GO--YOUR MAJESTY. WE'RE BOTH FLUSH, NOW. LET US PARTAKE OF EGGS AND COLD MUTTON, DOWN AT THE BLUE WING.

THANK YOU, SAM. YOUR RECEIPT.

I HESITATE TO TELL YOU THIS, SAM, BUT THERE ARE CERTAIN INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE ACCUSED ME OF. MM. WELL, BEING MAD.

SALOON

YOU... SHOCK ME, YOUR MAJESTY.

I THINK PERHAPS IT HAS SOMETHING TO DO WITH THE BRIDGE I HAVE COMMANDED BE BUILT ACROSS THE BAY TO OAKLAND.

A BRIDGE, HUH?

SAN FRANCISCO NEEDS BRIDGES, SAM. PEOPLE NEED BRIDGES.

UM. HELLO, DREAM.

THIS IS A... WEIRD... LITTLE TOWN, BROTHER. I MEAN, EVERYWHERE'S STRANGE.

BUT I FEEL AT HOME HERE. KIND OF.

YOU KNOW WHERE I SPENT TODAY? WELL.

ALL THE LITTLE CHINESE GIRLS WHO COME OVER HERE... YOU KNOW...

"...TWO BITS A TRICK..."

"...SO BY THE TIME THEY'RE TWENTY THEY'RE OLD WOMEN, TOO DISEASED TO LIVE..."

WELL THEY LOCK THEM AWAY IN THESE. PLACES. WHERE THEY STARVE TO DEATH OR MAYBE KILL THEMSELVES.,

I SPENT TODAY WITH SOME OF THEM. THEY'RE NICE. WHAT WAS I SAYING? DO YOU LIKE SEPTEMBER? I LIKE SEPTEMBER...

You are here about Norton, I take it. Under the terms of the challenge.

CHALLENGE? OH... YEAH. SHE SAID SOMETHING ABOUT THAT.

I DON'T KNOW.

HE OUGHT TO BE MINE, BUT HE ISN'T, IS HE?

I MEAN, THIS DARN FROG CAN OUT-JUMP ANYTHING.

HARRUMPH. PRAY CONTINUE.

NO.

HE'S SO SANE... EXCEPT ABOUT BEING EMPEROR, OF COURSE... AND I'M NOT EVEN SURE ABOUT.

THAT.

ARE YOU PLEASED TO SEE ME? MAYBE YOU ARE. I LIKE TO SEE YOU. BUT YOU'RE KIND OF SCARY.

Perhaps.

HUH?

Perhaps I AM pleased to see you, sister.

OH.

MM. SAMUEL... WHY DON'T YOU WRITE DOWN THE STORY OF THE FROG?

THE FROG?

PEOPLE WOULD LIKE TO READ ABOUT THE FROG. PEOPLE LIKE THINGS THAT MAKE THEM LAUGH.

PEOPLE LAUGH AT ME, YOU KNOW, SAM.

DON'T YOU MIND THAT, YOUR MAJESTY?

WHY SHOULD I MIND, SAM? LET THEM LAUGH. I AM STILL THEIR EMPEROR.

I DON'T LIKE IT. I DON'T LIKE IT WHEN PEOPLE LAUGH AT ME.

I LIKE YOU, SAM. YOU'RE A GOOD MAN. I'M GOING TO DO SOMETHING FOR YOU.

HMM... PMM... IT'S "TWAIN," ISN'T IT...?

UH HUH.

THERE YOU GO, SAM.

"I, **NORTON I**, HEREBY PROCLAIM THAT **SAMUEL CLEMENS**, NEWSPAPERMAN, WHO ALSO WRITES UNDER THE NOM-DE-PLUME OF **MARK TWAIN**, IS MADE, **BY ROYAL APPOINTMENT**, OFFICIAL SPINNER OF TALES AND TELLER OF STORIES TO THESE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, FOR THE DURATION OF HIS MORTAL LIFETIME. **NORTON I, EMPEROR.**"

FOR THE DURATION OF MY MORTAL LIFETIME, HUH?

THAT'S PRETTY **BIG** OF YOU, YOUR MAJESTY.

WELL, I MUST PROMENADE ONCE MORE TO SHOW MYSELF TO THE MULTITUDES. DUTY CALLS.

SAM? THANK YOU FOR THE MEAL. I APPRECIATE IT.

HE'S **NOT** MINE... IS HE?

HIS MADNESS...

HIS MADNESS KEEPS HIM SANE.

And do you think he is the only one, my sister?

SEPTEMBER, 1875.

HEY! MISTER! WOULD YOU BE THE *EMPEROR* NORTON?

INDEED.

YEAH? Y'KNOW, I WUZ *READING* ABOUT YOU IN OUR LOCAL PAPER. WE'RE ON VACATION.

WE'RE FROM *KANSAS*, M'WIFE AN' I--*THIS'S* THE WIFE, AND THIS'S M'DAUGHTER *LIZZIE*--AND *YOU* WUZ SOMETHING WE THOUGHT WE OUGHTTA KEEP OUR *EYES* PEELED FOR, WHEN WE WUZ IN *FRISCO*.

SAN FRANCISCO. *NOT* FRISCO. *THIS* IS THE TOWN OF *SAINT* FRANCIS.

UH. *SURE*. WELL, DO YOU STILL DO THAT *MONEY* THING? I READ ABOUT THAT.

CERTAINLY. THAT WILL BE *FIFTY CENTS*.

Received of ... FIFTY ... CE...

The amount, with interest, to be conve...
in lieu, or payable by the Agents of our Private Estate in a...
the First Inst, next hold fiand.
In testimony whereof, we hereto affix ou...

WHOO-*EEE*. WAIT'LL I SHOW EVERYBODY BACK HOME THE *SOO-VEN-EAR*.

THIS'LL BE ONE TO TELL YOUR *GRANDCHILDREN*, LIZZIE. YOU SAW THE *ONE* AND *ONLY EMPEROR* OF THE *UNITED STATES*!

YOUR AUGUST WISDOM, YOUR IMPERIAL MAGNIFICENCE, SON OF HEAVEN. I GREET YOU, I WHO AM NOT WORTHY TO STAND IN YOUR SHADOW.

GOOD DAY, AH HOW. HOW GOES IT AMONGST MY CHINESE SUBJECTS?

ALAS, IT GOES *BADLY*, LORD. TONG WARS CONTINUE BETWEEN KWONG DOCKS AND SUEY SING.

HMPH. THE KWONG DOCKS HAVE NOT YET MADE REPARATIONS, I TAKE IT?

NO, LORD. BUT IN TIME THEY MUST BEND, AS THE BAMBOO BENDS, OR THEY WILL BREAK, LIKE DRY TWIGS.

HEY! JOHNNY CHINESE! YOU KNOW ANY GOOD *OPIUM JOINTS*? ANYWHERE I CAN GO TO *DREAM* THAT *SPECIAL DREAM*?

VELLEE SOLLEE. SPEEKEE NO ENGRISH.

YEAH? WELL *SCREW YOU*, JOHNNY CHINESE. WHO *NEEDS* YOU ANYWAY?

YOUR HIGHNESS. I BRING A *MESSAGE* FOR YOU. YOUR PRESENCE IS REQUESTED.

IS THIS A MESSAGE FROM MY CHINESE SUBJECTS, AH HOW? AM I *NEEDED* IN *CHINATOWN*?

I REGRET *NOT*, LORD. YOUR PRESENCE IS REQUIRED AT THE *COBWEB PALACE*.

THE COBWEB PALACE.

AH.

I SEE.

GRANDFATHER? I HEAR MEN COMING.

LET THEM ENTER, GRIZZEL.

YOUR MAJESTY. AH HOW.

WELL, GENTLEMEN? WHAT'LL IT BE? WHATEVER YOU WANT--ON THE HOUSE.

NOTHING FOR ME, PLEASE, MISTER WARNER.

GOOD EVENING, ABRAHAM. I WILL HAVE A GLASS OF WHITE WINE, PLEASE. A LIGHT HOCK, IF YOU HAVE SUCH A THING.

GRANDFATHER? I HEAR A GHOST, RIDING TOWARD US. HE IS COMING HERE.

CALM YOURSELF, GRIZZEL. I KNOW HE'S COMING. HE'S THE LAST OF OUR GUESTS. HE WILL NOT HARM US.

NOT US. NOT HERE.

GREETINGS, GOOD FELLOWS. IT IS I: THE MONARCH OF MONKSHOOD, THE WIZARD OF WOLFSBANE, THE EARL OF ACONITE--

THE LATE-- THE GREAT--

THE KING OF PAIN.

REMEMBER ME?

THE KING OF PAIN. THE LINIMENT SALESMAN... I KNOW YOU.

BUT I HEARD THAT YOU HAD KILLED YOURSELF, OVER GAMBLING DEBTS. I AM... PLEASED TO SEE THAT YOU ARE HEALTHY.

HEALTHY? I'M DEAD, NORTON. YOU EVER SWALLOWED ACONITE? YOU DON'T GET UP AND WALK AWAY AGAIN.

BUT--

NO QUESTIONS, JOSHUA. YOU DON'T MIND IF I CALL YOU JOSHUA? ONE KING TO ANOTHER, AFTER ALL.

MY PRINCIPAL SENT ME HERE WITH AN OFFER FOR YOU.

YOUR PRINCIPAL?

MY PRINCIPAL HEARD ABOUT YOUR PROBLEM, JOSHUA.

I HAVE NO PROBLEMS, PAIN.

NO PROBLEMS? NOOOO PROBLEMMMMMS?

JOSHUA, BUDDY, BUBBY, YOU DON'T HAVE AN EMPRESS! YOU MAY BE NORTON I, BUT WHERE ARE NORTONS II TO XVI GOING TO COME FROM?

THE STORK ISN'T GOING TO BRING THEM.

I MUST ADMIT THAT THE SUBJECT HAS NOT ESCAPED MY NOTICE.

I HAVE PROPOSED MATRIMONY TO A NUMBER OF ELIGIBLE LADIES, BUT ALAS, I FEAR THAT THEY ARE ALL INTIMIDATED BY MY RANK, AND TO DATE THEY HAVE ALL REFUSED ME.

YEAH. WELL, NO SURPRISES THERE.

OKAY, JOSH. THIS IS THE SCORE.

I CAN OFFER YOU A FEW *POTENTIAL EMPRESSES.* TAKE YOUR *PICK*.

YOU WANNA SEE THEM WITH THEIR CLOTHES *ON* OR *OFF*?

SIR!

OKAY, *OKAY*. DON'T GET YOURSELF ALL RILED UP.

HERE'S THE CHOICE...

FIVE POTENTIAL *QUEENS*. ALL TOP DRAWER, GENUINE, SWEET-AS-PIE *ARISTOCRATS*.

YOU CHOOSE.

BUT THAT'S NOT *ALL* I'M OFFERING.

YOU CAN'T TAKE YOUR NEW EMPRESS BACK TO YOUR LITTLE COMMERCIAL STREET WALK-UP, *CAN* YOU?

YOU GIVE THE *WORD*, JOSHUA, BUILDING STARTS TOMORROW. NICE *HOUSE*, HUH?

I DON'T *UNDERSTAND*, SIR. ARE YOU EXPECTING ME TO MAKE SOME KIND OF *DEAL* WITH YOU?

OH NO. *NO NO NO NO NO NO NO NO NO NO NOOO.*

WELL, ONLY A *LITTLE* ONE.

LOOK AT HER. ISN'T SHE *BEAUTIFUL*? SHE COULD BE *YOURS*, JOSHUA. *ALL* YOURS.

ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS *WANT* HER.

ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS *WANT*.

KING OF PAIN--*IF* THAT IS WHO YOU TRULY ARE, FOR I AM A *RATIONAL* MAN AND DO *NOT* BELIEVE IN GHOSTS...

I AM THE EMPEROR OF THE UNITED STATES.

IT IS *TRUE* THAT MY RENT IS BUT 50 CENTS A WEEK. IT IS *TRUE* THAT MY CLOTHES WERE A GIFT FROM THE CITY COUNCIL.

I EXCHANGE FEDERAL CURRENCY FOR MY OWN, AND THUS I LIVE. *MANY* RESTAURANTS AND EATING HOUSES NOW ACCEPT MY SCRIP.

THIS IS *MY* CITY, IN *MY* COUNTRY. THEY TREAT ME *WELL* HERE.

I WANT *NOTHING.*

BUT YOU COULD BE A *REAL* EMPEROR, GODDAMMIT! YOU CAN HAVE *ANYTHING* YOU WANT!

YOU WERE WITH ME WHEN THEY ARRESTED ME FOR LUNACY, AH HOW, *AND* WHEN THEY *RELEASED* ME. DO YOU REMEMBER WHAT THE JUDGE TOLD THE YOUNG PATROLMAN?

I AM YOUR CHAMBERLAIN, HIGHNESS. I FORGET *NOTHING.*

HE SAID, "MISTER NORTON HAS *SHED* NO BLOOD, *ROBBED* NO ONE, AND *DESPOILED* NO *COUNTRY,* WHICH IS *MORE* THAN CAN BE SAID FOR *MOST* FELLOWS IN THE KING LINE."

I AM THE EMPEROR OF THE UNITED STATES, PAIN. I AM CONTENT TO BE WHAT I AM. WHAT MORE THAN *THAT* COULD *ANY* MAN DESIRE?

WARM FLESH, WRITHING BENEATH YOUR OWN? YOUNG, SCENTED, MOIST FEMALE FLESH? POWER? MONEY?

DON'T YOU WANT ANYTHING?

SIR. THIS CONVERSATION IS UNFITTING, AND IS AT AN END.

ABRAHAM? PLEASE SHOW THE KING OF PAIN THE DOOR.

WELL, G'NIGHT GENTS. YOU CAN KEEP THE PRETTY PICTURES.

AH HOW... WHAT HAPPENED HERE... THIS EVENING?

THE EMPEROR WAS OFFERED A CHOICE. THE EMPEROR SAID NO. THAT IS THE EMPEROR'S PREROGATIVE.

BAR

COBWEB PALACE

ABRAHAM? ANOTHER GLASS OF WINE, IF YOU PLEASE. THIS IS A GRIM SEASON; I NEED SOMETHING TO WARM ME INSIDE, AND PROTECT ME FROM THE DARKNESS AND THE FOG.

SO. YOU FAILED.

I... WELL. YEAH. SORRY, DESIRE.

HOW--HOW DID YOU *DO* THAT, DREAM?

NORTON LUSTS AFTER WOMEN. I CAN *FEEL* IT. HE WANTS SO *BADLY*...

THERE WAS NO *WAY* THAT HE COULD SAY NO. HE HAD NO *PROTECTION*. HE SHOULD HAVE BEEN *MINE*!

He has his dignity, sister-brother.

He is, after all, an emperor.

DON'T GIVE ME THAT SHIT, DREAM. *HE'S* NO KING. HE'S A *CRAZY* MAN WITH A *COCKEYED FANTASY*.

PAIN--GET YOUR DEAD ASS IN HERE. WE'RE *GOING*.

Desire? You disappoint me.

This evening's display: bringing back a dead man to offer Norton the pleasures of the world. It was not very subtle.

GO SCREW YOURSELF, BIG BROTHER.

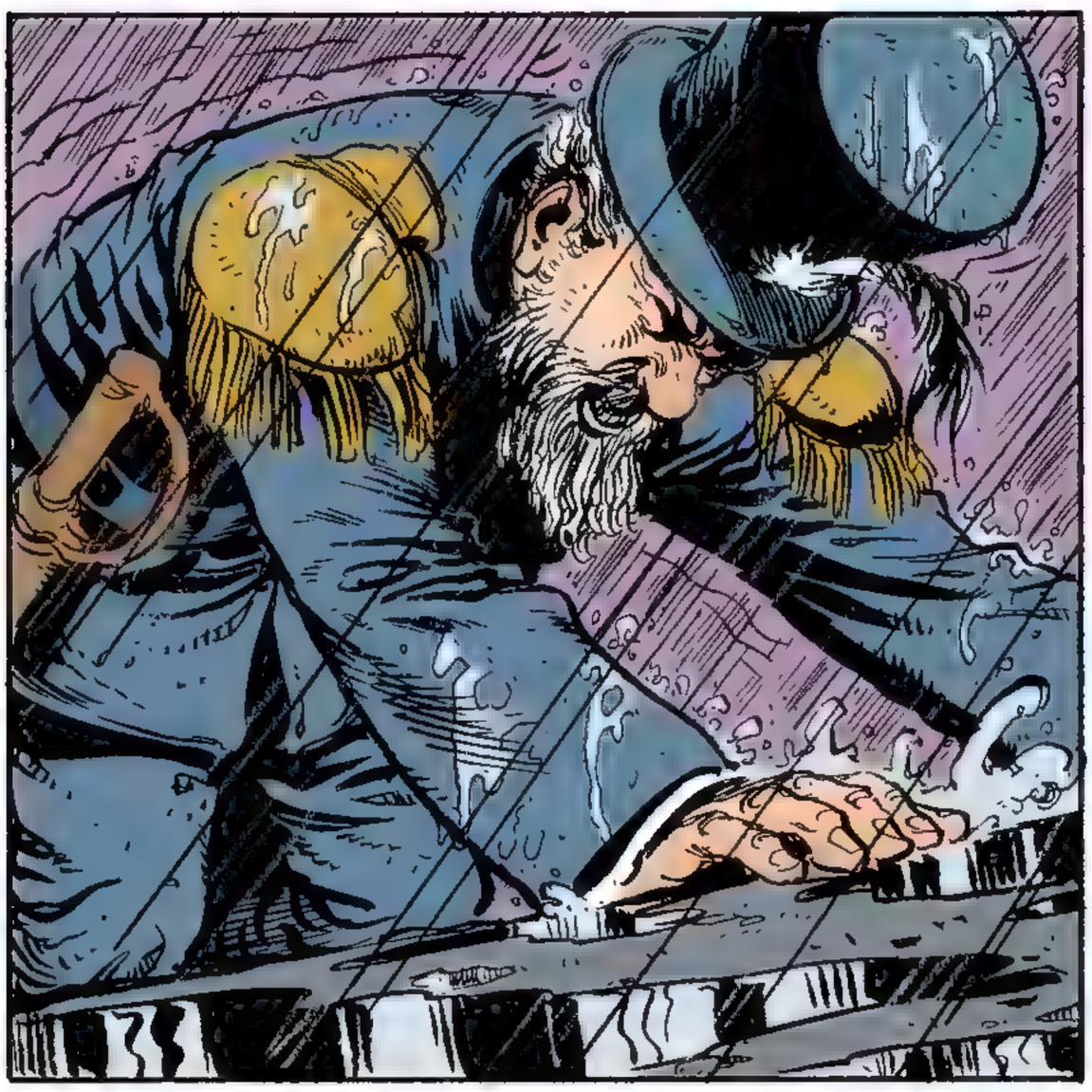
"GET DOWN AND LICK, PAIN."

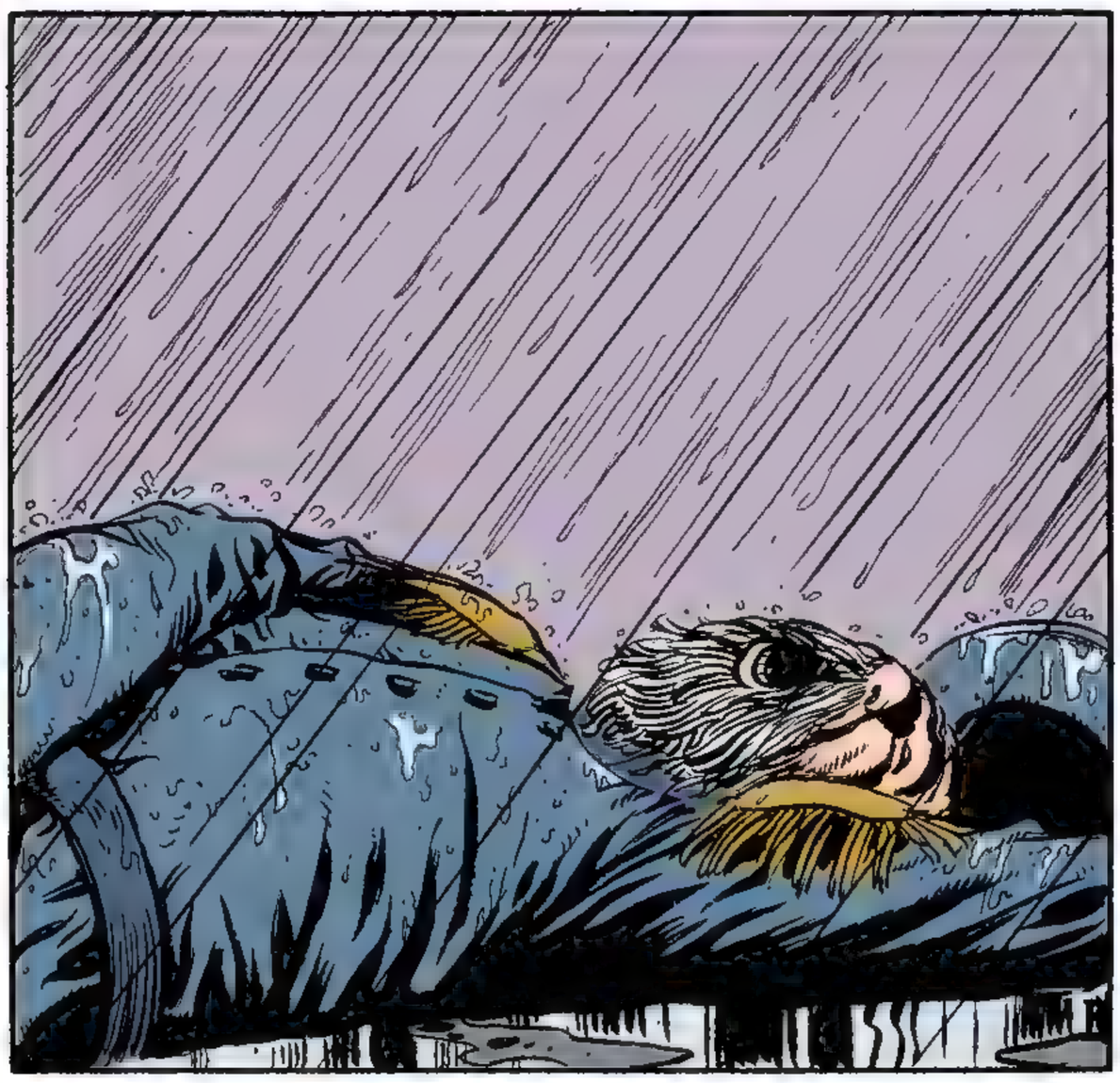
"HE WANTS *SUBTLE*? HE'LL *GET* SUBTLE. JUST *WATCH* ME.

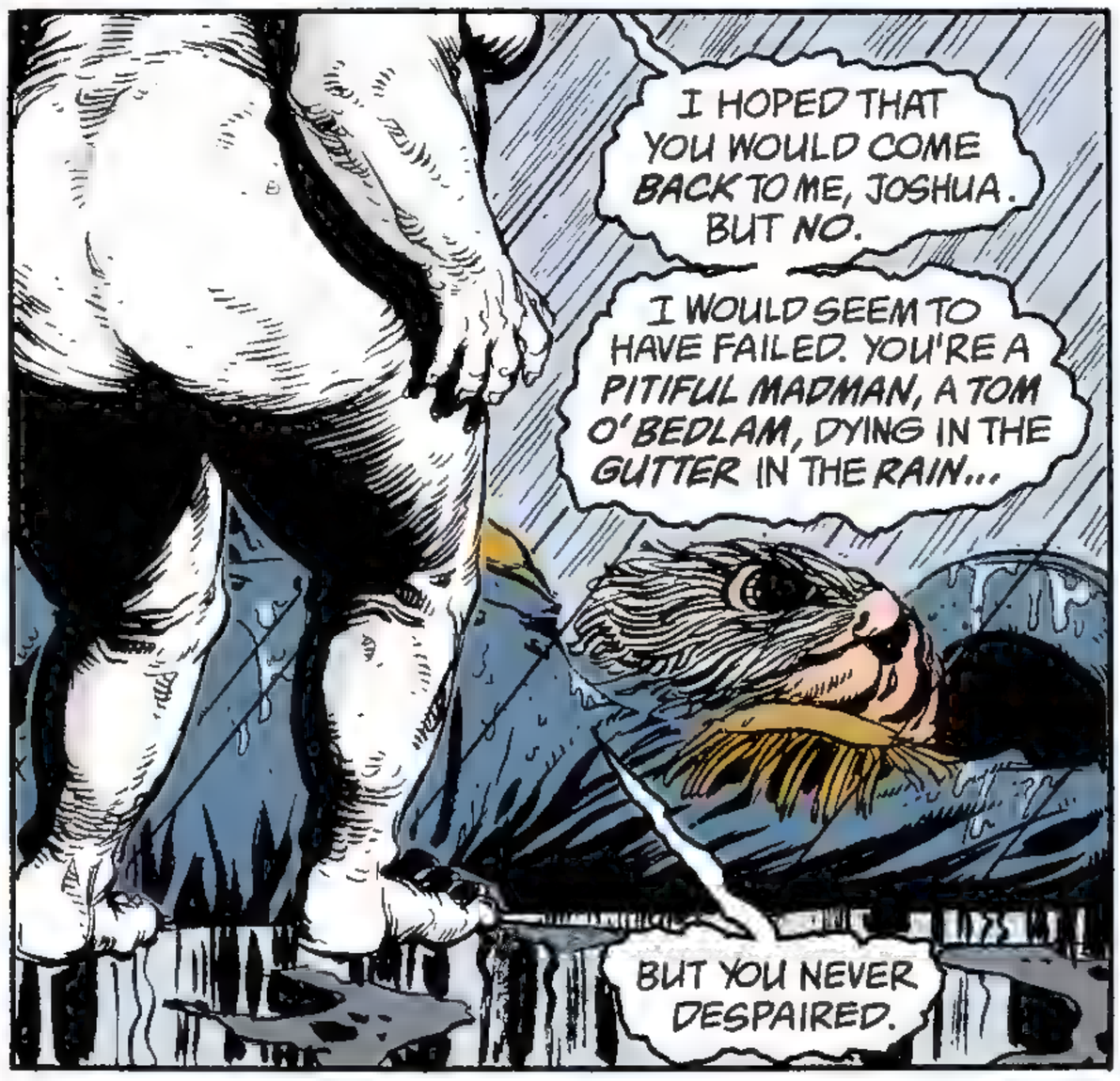
"NOT *HERE*. NOT WITH *NORTON*. BUT I'LL MAKE HIM SPILL FAMILY BLOOD; I'LL BRING THE *KINDLY ONES* DOWN ON HIS BLASTED HEAD...

"ONE DAY..."

JANUARY 8, 1880. 8:00 P.M.






I HOPED THAT YOU WOULD COME BACK TO ME, JOSHUA. BUT NO.
I WOULD SEEM TO HAVE FAILED. YOU'RE A PITIFUL MADMAN, A TOM O'BEDLAM, DYING IN THE GUTTER IN THE RAIN...
BUT YOU NEVER DESPAIRED.

YOU WON.

So it would appear, my sister.

Here--I have something for you, to remember this little challenge by.

WHAT IS IT?

A statuette. They sell them in this town--mementos for travellers from distant parts of the Emperor of this land.

Keep it, Despair. Take it back with you, to the world behind the mirrors. Keep it as a souvenir.

SHOULD I THANK YOU?

For the Lesson, perhaps, if for nothing else.

...WHAT LESSON?

TIME'S UP, YOUR MAJESTY.

HOW ARE YOU FEELING?

I DON'T KNOW...I *WAS* TO ATTEND A MEETING AT THE HASTINGS SOCIETY THIS EVENING, THEN IT FELT LIKE SOMETHING *STRUCK* ME IN THE CHEST...

I FEEL VERY *STRANGE.*

YOU WERE *JEWISH* ONCE, WEREN'T YOU, JOSHUA? DID YOU EVER HEAR THE STORY OF THE *36 TZADDIKIM?*

I...DO NOT BELIEVE SO.

THEY SAY THAT THE WORLD RESTS ON THE BACKS OF 36 LIVING SAINTS--36 UNSELFISH MEN AND WOMEN. BECAUSE OF *THEM* THE WORLD CONTINUES TO EXIST.

THEY ARE THE SECRET KINGS AND QUEENS OF THIS WORLD.

AN ODD LEGEND, YOUNG LADY. BUT I'M AFRAID I DO NOT SEE ITS *SIGNIFICANCE.*

NO?

I'VE MET A *LOT* OF KINGS, AND EMPERORS AND HEADS OF STATE IN MY TIME, JOSHUA. *I'VE* MET THEM *ALL.* AND YOU *KNOW* SOMETHING?

I THINK I LIKED *YOU* BEST.

WELL ...*THANK YOU,* YOUNG LADY.

IT'S A *GREAT HAT.* CAN I TRY IT ON?

I DO NOT SEE WHY NOT.

I MUST CONFESS, I HAVE *ALWAYS* WONDERED WHAT LAY BEYOND LIFE, MY DEAR.

YEAH, *EVERYBODY* WONDERS. AND SOONER OR LATER EVERYBODY GETS TO FIND OUT.

JOSHUA NORTON WAS BURIED ON SUNDAY, THE 10th OF JANUARY 1880. 10,000 PEOPLE FILED PAST THE BODY, AS IT LAY IN STATE; AND HIS FUNERAL CORTEGE WAS OVER TWO MILES LONG.

HIS BURIAL WAS MARKED BY A TOTAL ECLIPSE OF THE SUN.

HE WAS THE FIRST AND LAST EMPEROR OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

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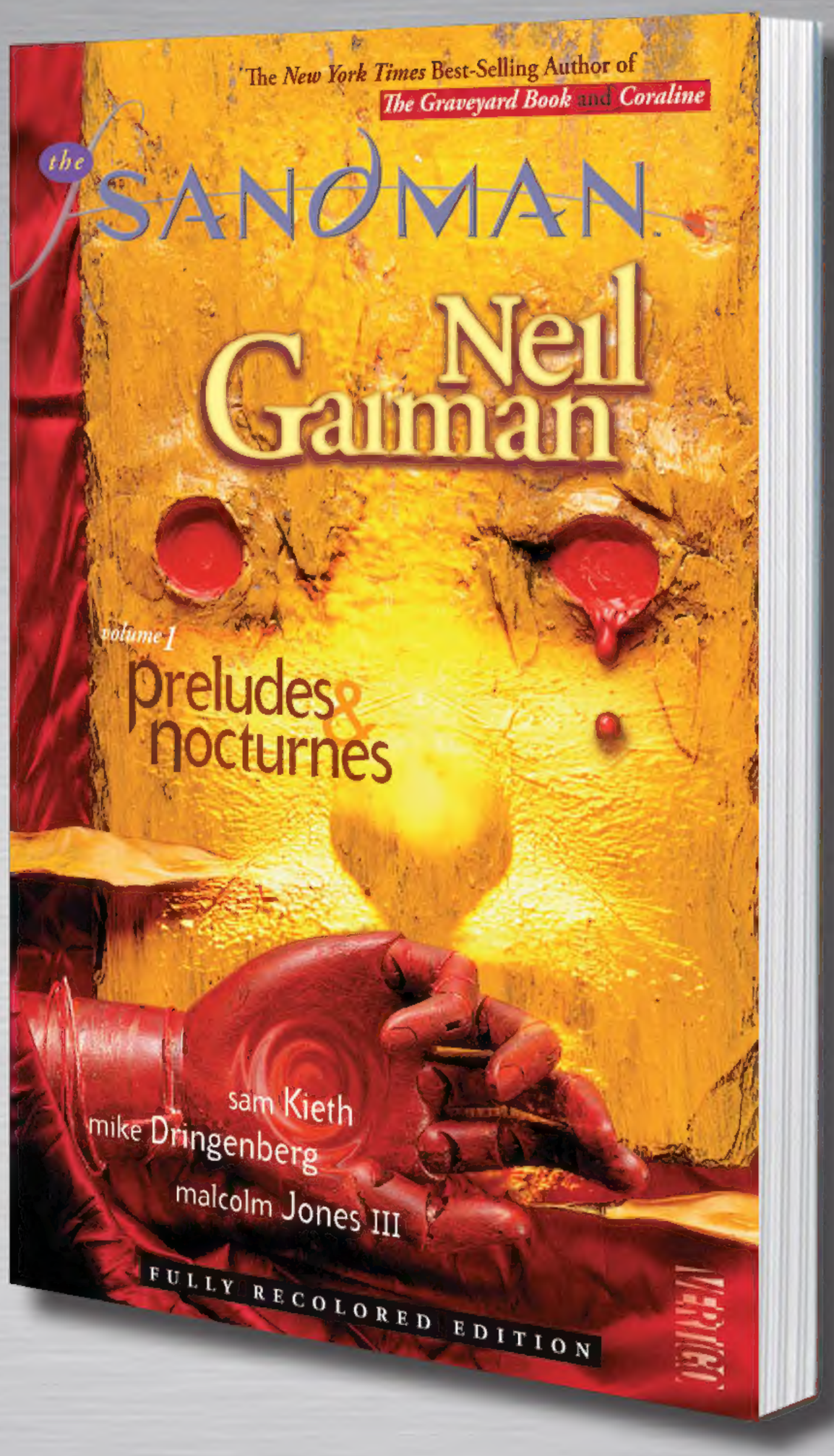
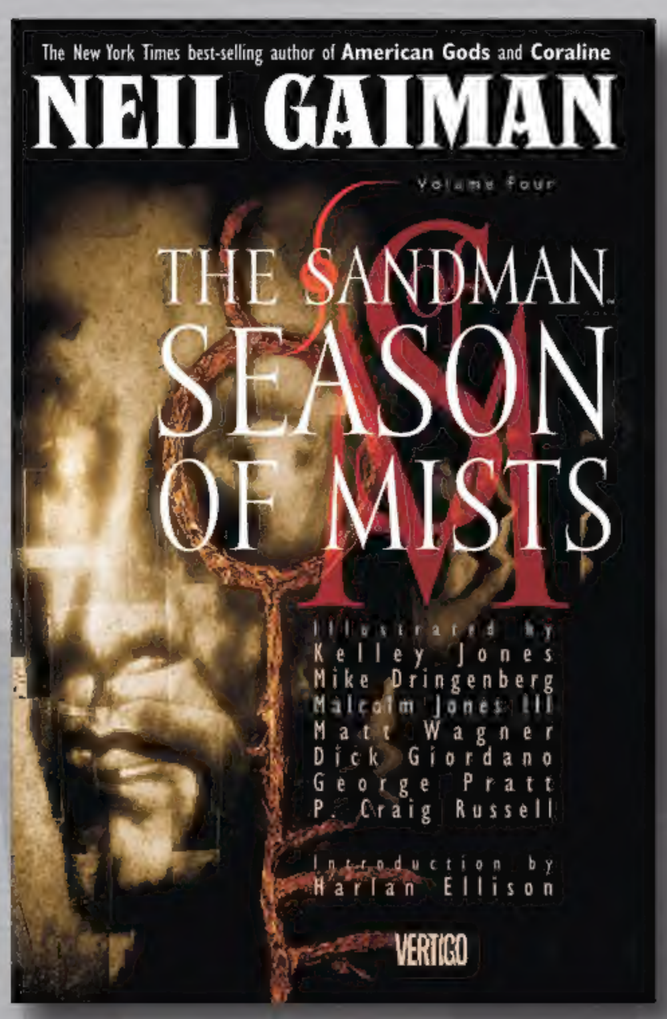


THE SANDMAN VOL. 4:
SEASON OF MISTS



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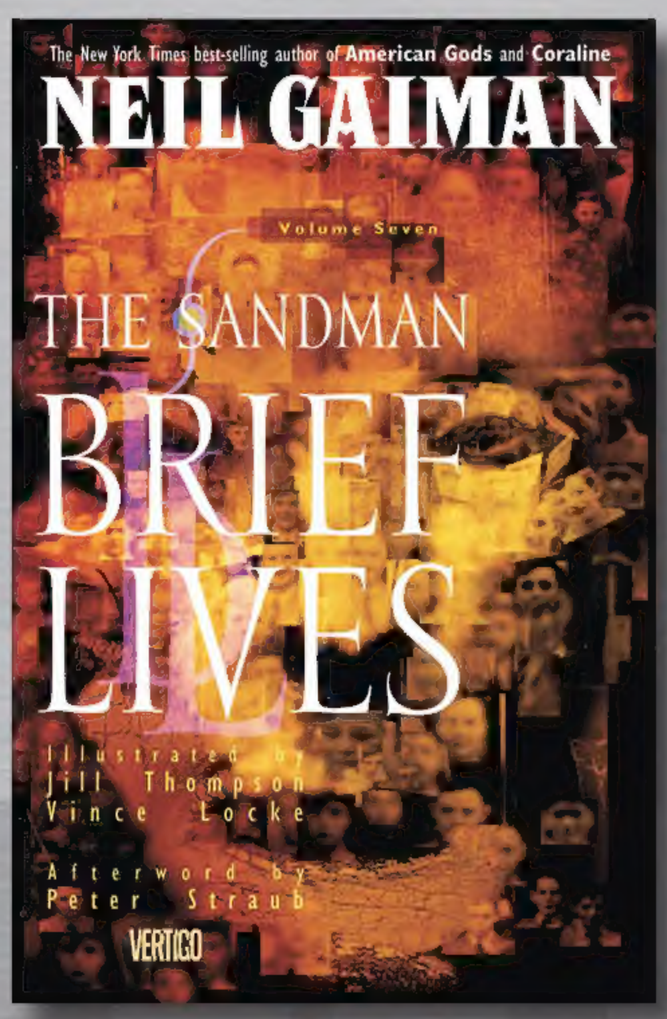
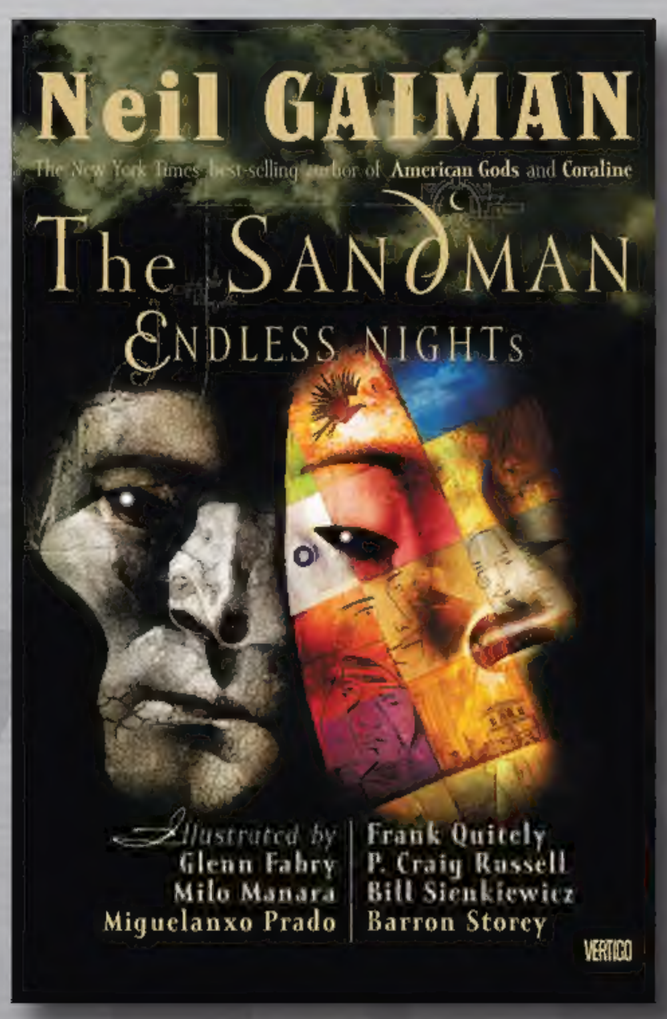


THE SANDMAN:
ENDLESS NIGHTS



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